

Maquoketa
Sentinel-Press
Maquoketa, IA
Circ. 4411
From Page:
1
10/1/2005
41982



¹⁰⁸ **Jackson Co. pitches its Iowa Great Places plan**

By KELLY GERLACH

A cold draft chilled and lightning flashed when Ansel Briggs, dead 124 years now, rose from the dead Wednesday, Sept. 28.

The former Andrew resident and Iowa's first governor descended upon Jackson County – conveniently being heard in the Ohnward Fine Arts Center in front of three visiting members of the Great Places Citizens Advisory Board – to extol the county's many virtues and list its needed improvements.

"I come back to earth periodically to tell people about the place I fell in love with, simply beautiful Jackson County," Briggs said.

Well, maybe the set up actually revolved around special sound effects, a slide show presentation and the voice of Leighton Hepker, but the mission to promote Jackson County remained true.

About 50 people attended the 50-minute presentation, those individuals representing various segments of the Jackson County such as city, county and state government, economic development, education, finance, media, conserva-

tion, etc.

Many of these individuals serve on the county's Great Places Team, coordinated to showcase the county and woo the state's Great Places board.

Bill Menner, Amanda Styron and Sam Erickson, members of that state board, sat in Ohnward's plush seats with pens in hand and notepads on laps as they listened to Jackson County's pitch to be named an Iowa Great Place.

Gov. Tom Vilsack announced the Iowa Great Places initiative earlier this year as a way to help Iowans promote bold thought and innovations and cultivate all the qualities that make their communities unique. About \$8 million in new money would help the communities develop plans and attractions to draw tourists and enhance quality of life.

Only three of the 146 places across the state that applied will be selected as pilot programs.

Jackson County wants to be one of those three.

Hepker, as Ansel Briggs, led the advisory board members and audience on a tour of the county accompanied by a computerized slide show presentation of spots and projects

■ **COUNTY, Please turn to page 18**



Maquoketa
Sentinel-Press
Maquoketa, IA
Circ. 4411
From Page:
18i
10/1/2005
41982



COUNTY: _____

Continued from page 1

of interest throughout the county.

Among the county's assets included in the narrative – more than 60 sites on the National Register of Historic Places, museums,

26 parks and recreational areas, the beauty of the bluffs and the Mississippi River and development of over 150 new lots for construction.

The Jackson County team said it hoped to become of a cultural corridor from Dubuque to Davenport with more than 40 artists scattered throughout the county.

Expanded and new libraries, the Ohnward Fine Arts Center and historical society were among the ways to add culture to the area.

According to the presentation, Jackson County tourism saw a

\$980,000 increase in tourism dollars, making it fifth in the state. The county also noted a four-point decrease in the unemployment rate and an increase in average hourly wages.

Education, conservation, preservation, health care and entrepreneurship also made their way into the presentation.

After celebrating the county's numerous attractions, businesses and people, the presentation went on to describe new projects on the horizon, including ATV and hiking trails. While creating Wednesday's presentation, the local Great Places Team noted the need to save Elbridge Potter's home, which was Iowa's first lending library, and the Iowa Marine Engine and Launch Co., naming them "gems that need polishing."

Jackson County pinned its hopes on being branded a destination, "a great place to play for a day or stay for a lifetime."

Following a little more rain and lightning and Ansel Briggs returning to the hereafter, Bill Menner, Amanda Styron

and Sam Erickson took the opportunity to ask questions about the county's future plans. They asked about ATV's impact on the county's conservation and natural resources, working with other counties for joint enhancement purposes.





Maquoketa
Sentinel-Press
Maquoketa, IA
Circ. 4411
From Page:
18i
10/1/2005
41982

The advisory board also wanted the county to list what initiatives it plans to complete within the next 12 months. Mentioned were plans to hire a county tourism director, develop a bike race through the county and establishing the ATV trails to link the towns.

Menner ended the question and answer session by saying the board was glad to hear Jackson County's "genesis of new ideas" from the Great Places program and said choosing three pilot programs would be "incredibly difficult. "I hope the energy created by this will continue ... You don't need

us to tell you it's a great place."

The Great Places Citizens Advisory Board will select and announce the three final programs at a meeting Oct. 11 in Iowa City.



Sen. Roger Stewart and Rep. Tom Schueller speak with Amanda Styron, Sam Erickson and Bill Menner of the Iowa Great Places Citizens Advisory Board Wednesday. The board members were in Maquoketa to hear the county's pitch to be designated an Iowa Great Place. Such a designation would bring money to the county to develop tourism and other attractions and improve residents' quality of life.